# General Assembly

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**Fifty-ninth session**
Agenda item 39 (*a*)

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/59/L.49 and Add.1)*]

### 59/141. Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

*The General Assembly*,

*Recalling* its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, other relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council,

*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General,[1]

*Reaffirming* the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

*Recognizing* that independence, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented, is also an important guiding principle for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

*Gravely concerned* that violence, including sexual abuse and sexual and other violence against women, girls and boys, continues to be, in many emergency situations, deliberately directed against civilian populations,

*Gravely concerned also* about the lack of access by humanitarian personnel to victims of humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in many regions of the world,

*Reaffirming* the responsibility first and foremost of States to take care of the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders, while recognizing that the magnitude and duration of many emergencies may be beyond the response capacity of many affected countries,

*Reaffirming also* that States whose populations are in need of humanitarian assistance are called upon to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations and that States in proximity to humanitarian emergencies are urged to facilitate, to the extent possible, the transit of humanitarian assistance,

[1] A/59/93-E/2004/74.

*Concerned* about the need to mobilize adequate support, including financial resources, for emergency humanitarian assistance at all levels, including at national, regional and international levels,

*Emphasizing* that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat should benefit from adequate and more predictable funding, while stressing the importance for the Office to continue to make efforts to broaden its donor base,

*Reiterating* that contributions for humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way that is not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development,

*Recognizing* the importance of humanitarian assistance in ensuring the effective transition from conflict to peace and the positive effect it may have in preventing the recurrence of armed conflict, and that humanitarian assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development,

*Noting with grave concern* the growing intensity and recurrence of natural disasters, and reaffirming the importance of sustainable measures to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards using an integrated, multi-hazard and participatory approach to addressing vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the outcome of the seventh humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council, during its substantive session of 2004;

2. *Encourages* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue his efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations as well as other humanitarian and development actors to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat in enhancing the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

3. *Recognizes* the importance of secure and predictable funding to the coordinated, appropriate and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, stresses the need to increase in an incremental way, in the normal course of the budget process, the share of the budget of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs borne by the regular budget of the United Nations, and requests the Secretary-General to give this matter full consideration;

4. *Emphasizes* the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council and that these discussions should be further revitalized by Member States;

5. *Calls upon* Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to ensure timely implementation of and follow-up to resolutions of the General Assembly and resolutions of the Economic and Social Council adopted at the humanitarian affairs segment of its substantive sessions;

6. *Strongly encourages* the United Nations to address more systematically protection of civilians and other humanitarian issues with regional organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, inter alia, through dialogue;

7. *Decides* to raise the maximum limit of an emergency cash grant to 100,000 United States dollars per country in the case of any one disaster, within existing resources available from the regular budget of the United Nations;

8. *Encourages* the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Group Office, to improve further the training and capacity of humanitarian and resident coordinators so that they can respond to the full range of humanitarian issues and those related to transition from relief to development in a given context, including protection and assistance needs;

9. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to ensure that the design and implementation of United Nations integrated missions take into account the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality as well as independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance;

10. *Welcomes* the ongoing work within the United Nations on the complex issue of transition from relief to development, and takes note of the request by the Economic and Social Council to the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the issue for further consideration by the Council and the General Assembly;

11. *Emphasizes* the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, reaffirms the leading role of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, particularly in areas affected by conflicts, and affirms the need, in situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, for their use to be in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles;

12. *Recalls* the 2003 "Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies",[2] as well as the 1994 "Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief",[3] and stresses the value of their use and of the development by the United Nations in consultation with States and other relevant actors of further guidance on civil-military relations in the context of humanitarian activities and transition situations;

13. *Strongly condemns* all acts of violence committed against civilian populations in situations of humanitarian crisis, especially against women, girls and boys, including sexual violence and abuse, and reiterates that such acts can constitute serious violations or grave breaches of international humanitarian law and constitute, in defined circumstances, a crime against humanity and/or a war crime;

14. *Calls upon* States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to acts of violence committed against civilian populations as well as to ensure that those responsible are promptly brought to justice, as provided for by national law and obligations under international law;

15. *Reaffirms* the obligation of all States and parties to an armed conflict to protect civilians in armed conflicts in accordance with international humanitarian law, and invites States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

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[2] Available from www.reliefweb.int.

[3] Department of Humanitarian Affairs publication, DHA/94/95.

16. *Encourages* Member States with internally displaced persons to develop or strengthen, as appropriate, national laws, policies and minimum standards on internal displacement, inter alia, taking into account the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,[4] and to continue to work with humanitarian agencies in endeavours to provide a more predictable response to the needs of internally displaced persons, and in this regard calls for international support, upon request, to the capacity-building efforts of Governments;

17. *Strongly condemns* all forms of violence to which humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel are increasingly subjected, as well as any act or failure to act, contrary to international law that obstructs or prevents humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel from discharging their humanitarian functions;

18. *Calls upon* all Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel as well as supplies and equipment in order to allow them to perform efficiently their task of assisting the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

19. *Expresses concern* about the continued occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises, emphasizes that the highest standards of conduct and accountability are required of all personnel serving in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and requests the Secretary-General to report on measures to follow up, inter alia, the Plan of Action on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee[5] and the application of the bulletin of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;[6]

20. *Takes note with interest* of the progress being made by donors to improve their policies and practices of good donorship, including under the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, and calls upon donors to take further steps to improve their policies and practices with respect to humanitarian assistance;

21. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations organizations to continue to improve transparency and reliability of humanitarian needs assessments;

22. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to improve his reporting on emergency humanitarian assistance, including with respect to natural disasters;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2005, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

*72nd plenary meeting*
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[4] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

[5] See A/57/465, annex I.

[6] ST/SGB/2003/13.